

The Edito

Editorial

There are No Bully Cops in Wasatch County

The familiar videotaped scene of the L.A. cops brutally beating an unarmed man with their batons was like a rock dropped into a still lake, and the ripples probably won't settle down for a long time. What's sad is that those ripples even reached into our quiet, rural cove.

The cops in our county and city police departments can be accurately described as peace officers. We've seen them have to get tough, but we've never seen them get mean.

Our kids grin and wave at cops around here, often calling them by name. More important, the kids know that if they feel threatened by anything or anyone, they can turn to a cop for protection or help.

The trouble is that about a year ago our cops started wearing those same sticks used in the L.A. videotape. The object is to provide officers with more force than bare hands when they have to apprehend an unruly and possibly dangerous suspect, without having to resort to handguns. The sticks are issued to *reduce* the necessity for deadly force and keep injuries at a minimum.

But there probably isn't a kid in town that hasn't seen the videotape showing uniformed police officers unconscionably beating a man with their sticks as he helplessly crawled along the ground. It's not unreasonable to expect an eight-year-old to note that the officers he sees on Main St. in Heber City wear similar uniforms and carry those same sticks, and to conclude that they are capable of the same type of behavior. Chief Jim Matthews reports that's exactly what some of our kids now think.

Kids have a right to feel safe with family, teachers and cops. In fact the local cop is supposed to be the one kids can turn to when they feel threatened at home or at school.

The cop's the guy that squats down to eye level with a little kid and deciphers the words that come out between the sobs, then holds the little hand securely until mother and child can be reunited. He's the guy that a youngster getting bullied or a teenage girl being followed can stop and ask for protection. He's the one that will listen patiently while you explain why you ran a yellow light before he hands you a citation and courteously tells you to have a good day. He's also the guy that will be pretty stern and not smile much while he cites you for driving 32 mph through a 20 mph school zone, because you just endangered the lives of some little kids.

Our friendly local cops wear similar uniforms and carry the same batons as the L.A. cops who appeared to enjoy inflicting pain and injury on a human being. Most kids think about more than they talk about and some are wondering if that's standard procedure for cops. Kids don't take to mean people. They don't trust them. Even when they're scared, they'll turn for help to a kind friend rather than a perverse bully.

We urge parents to take just a minute to be sure their kids know that brutality is *not* standard procedure around here and that they can count on our cops to be the same friends they have always been.

A while back, a visitor from a big city saw a uniformed Heber City cop surrounded by four or five people and asked what was going on. He was astounded that the answer was "nothing." "You mean those people are just standing there, voluntarily talking to a *cop*?" As the visitor stared in awe, the little group and the cop laughed at something. "Unbelievable," said the stranger, shaking his head. Incidentally, he was a school teacher, not a hood.

We had grown accustomed to the peace and security of our little community, and to the good cops that make it so. It took a few bad cops in L.A. and an observation from an outsider to jar us into appreciating what we were taking for granted. We should be able to take our safety for granted, but every once in a while we need to stop a moment and appreciate our

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"Since then, they've built churches and schools and everything along there," he said.

Utah County citizens say their children are endangered by the truck traffic along 800 North and University Ave., through Provo, because 15 schools are within five blocks of the two streets.

"I personally have to blame them for that, because they didn't zone it properly," Coleman said.

He further pointed out that trucks coming from the canyon that are headed for I-15 want to get there as soon as possible and don't use University Ave. He said the trucks on University Ave. are on local routes.

Commissioner LaRen Provost reminded the commissioners of a State Transportation Commission meeting during which people in Salt Lake City complained about pollution and noise from trucks on the new Interstate 215, on the east side of the city. Since routing diesel

trucks through Salt Lake City would only move the truck emissions from one county with pollution problems to another with the same problems, without solving anything.

In any case, Coleman said he doesn't know how the restrictions could be enforced.

"I don't know how they can stop a truck coming through from Vernal, and let it go on to Provo, and stop one coming from the other direction," he said.

According to a legal opinion from the State Attorney General's office, the State can ban interstate trucks from a highway for health and safety reasons. However, the State Transportation Commission has expressed concern that the state could lose millions of dollars in federal road funds if traffic through the canyon is restricted.

"Truckers are paying a lot of road taxes," Coleman said.

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two years ago, and they agreed to use the clean trash to fill a slide area. They are now covering the debris with topsoil.

"It was the public that caused that garbage to go in there, not the Binggeli's," Mathis emphasized.

Because of growth in the county, he said some major road projects are planned that will need gravel, and Binggeli has some of the contracts to supply it. Mathis said he prefers to have Binggeli operate to having the Utah Department of Transportation open up its own gravel pits, like in Daniels Canyon and in the Jordanelle area. The county has no jurisdiction over the state's pits and they have been operated in a way that is not

material will be changed, and the processing plant and haul road will remain where they are.

Dust control has apparently been successful, since Binggeli said there have been no complaints, and he can see no reason for it to become a problem. He said the State Air Quality Control Administration regularly inspects the operation and will shut down the business if it doesn't comply with the administration's guidelines and limits.

Binggeli said if the rezoning isn't approved, "there isn't going to be a thing changed down there. We're going to still do 150,000 tons a year and keep going up the mountain."



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Green, R. Raymond
375 E. 200 N.
Heber City, UT 84032

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